

VZCZCXRO4511
RR RUEHCHI RUEHDT RUEHHM RUEHNH
DE RUEHGO #0857/01 2540954
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 110954Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6483
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1513
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0488
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 4599
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4021
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7578
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5135
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 0087
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 1185
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1070
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 0048
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHDC
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHPH/CDC ATLANTA GA
RUCLRFA/USDA WASHDC
RUEHRC/USDA FAS WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 RANGOON 000857

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, G/AIAG
PACOM FOR FPA
USDA FOR FAS/PECAD, FAS/CNMP, FAS/AAD, APHIS;
BANGKOK FOR USAID: JMACARTHUR, APHIS:NCARDENAS, REO:JWALLER

E.O. 12958:N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [EAID](#) [AMED](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [TBIO](#) [KFLU](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: AI FIELD TRIP SHOWS GOB IMPLEMENTING BIOSECURITY MEASURES

REF: Rangoon 738

RANGOON 00000857 001.2 OF 003

¶1. (SBU) Summary. During a field trip to Taikkyi Township in Northern Rangoon Division, Embassy officers saw firsthand how the Burmese Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) and local farmers implemented avian influenza biosecurity procedures. LBVD, in conjunction with the FAO and WHO, have trained more than 75 veterinarians and hosted more than fifty biosecurity training courses throughout Burma in 2007. Although LBVD has also provided some compensation to farmers, lack of a clear compensation program remains a concern. During visits to two chicken farms outside of Rangoon, donors saw how well local farmers have implemented the biosecurity measures taught in the LBVD training classes. End Summary.

Teaching Biosecurity Measures -----

¶2. (SBU) Officials from LBVD, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the Australian, Japanese, and U.S. Embassies traveled to Taikkyi Township in Northern Rangoon Division (approximately 70 miles north of Rangoon) to attend the opening ceremony of an LBVD Biosecurity Training Course and to observe biosecurity measures implemented at two local chicken farms. During the training session opening ceremony, LBVD and FAO officials emphasized the importance of cooperating with international NGOs and local chicken farmers to prevent avian influenza (AI) outbreaks. U Myat Kyaw, Chair of the Township Peace and Development Council, thanked the donors and emphasized that AI not only affects chickens, but threatens the livelihood of farmers.

13. (SBU) LBVD officials informed us of its plans to improve AI procedures. Recognizing how economically devastating AI could be to Burma, LBVD wants to shift its program to address long-term needs rather than implementing only short-term measures. Pleading for additional AI assistance, LBVD Rangoon Division Chief Dr. Soe Win explained that LBVD would use the money to improve surveillance and biosecurity measures, look for ways to mitigate the negative impact of the disease on vulnerable groups, and create incentives for reporting by establishing a compensation policy. He observed that LBVD and MOH officials continue to lack epidemiology skills, but hoped that donors would fund the FAO's proposal to hire an international epidemiology specialist to train health workers.

Increasing Awareness

14. (SBU) To increase public awareness of AI, LBVD plans in 2007 to host 90 one-day biosecurity training classes with 50 participants, for a total of 4,500 people trained. These training sessions target local poultry farmers, local veterinarians, and health workers, and teach them proper measures to prevent AI outbreaks. To date, LBVD has conducted more than 50 courses, training more than 2,500 people. In March, LBVD held a two-day training course for 75 veterinarians, who are certified to conduct further training at the township level throughout the country. In the September 7 session, 31 farmers, one veterinarian, four chicken sellers, and fourteen local NGO and health officials participated.

LBVD Biosecurity Training Plan, 2007

State/Division	Number of Courses	Total Cost in Kyat
RANGOON 00000857 002.2 OF 003		
Kachin State	5	1,150,000
Kayah State	1	230,000
Kayin State	3	690,000
Chin State	2	460,000
Sagaing Division	8	1,840,000
Mandalay Division	17	3,910,000
Mon State	4	920,000
Tanintharyi Division	3	690,000
Bago (East) Division	8	1,840,000
Bago (West) Division	4	920,000
Magway Division	3	690,000
Rakhine State	2	460,000
Shan (East) State	2	460,000
Shan (South) State	4	920,000
Shan (North) State	5	1,150,000
Rangoon (South) Division	5	1,150,000
Rangoon (North) Division	6	1,380,000
Irrawaddy Division	8	1,840,000
Total	90	20,700,000

Source: LBVD, September 2007

(Note: Total spent is approximately \$15,000. End Note.)

15. (SBU) WHO Country Director Adik Wibowo inquired about the relationship between LBVD and the Ministry of Health in dealing with AI outbreaks. National AI Project Coordinator Dr. Than Htun explained that LBVD informs the Ministry of Health of outbreaks, and local MOH officials often visit the outbreak site to conduct their human health surveys. Currently, the Ministry of Health lacks the capacity to test humans for AI, and instead monitors those living around AI outbreak sites for a one-week period. LBVD has trained more than 20 MOH officials in the biosecurity classes.

Still No Compensation Policy

16. (SBU) In addition to biosecurity training, Dr. Soe Win explained how the GOB is working to help farmers hurt by the disease. In Sagaing Division, the GOB launched a pilot project,

setting aside a total of 181 acres in five townships for new poultry zones. These zones, located outside of residential areas, are equipped with telephone connections, water, and electricity. In terms of compensation, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has provided farmers with more than 87,000 day old chicks (total value 35 million kyat or \$26,000) and the Livestock Bank has provided more than 100 farmers with low-interest loans. Additionally, the GOB, which closely guards cell phone licenses, granted permission to several farmers to purchase cell phones. These farmers borrowed money to cover the cost of the phone and SIM card (more than \$1,500 for both), which they either resold at a higher price or used to set up set up a side business, charging customers who use the phone.

17. (SBU) Tang Zhengping, FAO Country Director, noted that while LBVD has provided compensation to some farmers, others have yet to be remunerated. The GOB, he underscored, must establish a comprehensive compensation package to encourage farmers to report any AI outbreaks (reftel). When asked how long it takes the government to provide farmers with compensation, Dr. Soe Win admitted that not all farmers have been compensated, and that the Ministry of Livestock and Breeding must evaluate each case before providing compensation. It takes between 4-5 months to provide compensation. The Ministry, he emphasized, wants to offer one to one compensation for chickens lost, but lacks the necessary funding.

The Case of Two Chicken Farms

RANGOON 00000857 003.2 OF 003

18. (SBU) After the opening ceremony, we visited two large commercial chicken farms in Mawbi Township to view how they implement biosecurity measures. Neither farm previously experienced an AI outbreak, although the second farm was located six miles from a farm infected by AI in 2006. At both farms, visitors had to wear protective coverings on their feet and were advised to not touch the birds. Before entering the first farm, we had to dip our feet in an ammonia disinfectant solution. At the second farm, only the workers were permitted to enter the chicken coop area after going through a disinfecting process; we could only watch. Both farmers explained that they attended the LBVD training class to prevent an AI outbreak on their farms. Before the class, they had limited knowledge of AI, but have since learned how they can protect their farms and workers. The owner of the second farm explained that his staff, now aware of AI symptoms, knows what to look for and how to contain the site. He is confident that the biosecurity measures will help protect his farm from an AI outbreak, although he assured us that if an outbreak occurred on his farm, he would report it immediately.

Comment

19. (SBU) LBVD continues to do what it can with its limited resources to increase public awareness of avian influenza. LBVD officials recognize that the lack of a real compensation package is an issue; while they remain confident that farmers are reporting cases, they cannot confirm whether they report in a timely fashion. Shifting the focus to encompass long term goals, such as a compensation policy, requires additional funding -- funding that the generals, who fail to comprehend the destructive nature of AI, do not provide. While donor assistance plays a key role in educating the public about the dangers of AI, government funding is necessary for the establishment of a comprehensive compensation policy.

VILLAROSA